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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF DISTRIBUTION
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7 Minute Radio Script

Reserve

WFA COMMUNITY SCHOOL LUNCH

Shortly before the outbreak of war, the President's National Nutrition Conference reports brought out some astonishing facts concerning the health and nutrition needs of the people of the United States. Rejections due to physical disabilities revealed by the Selective Service examinations gave emphasis to the fact that many of these were the result of poor diet during the early years that were the formative periods for these young selectees. Recently the Special Sub-Committee on Wartime Health and Education began a series of public hearings on the Nation's Wartime Health Program. At that time Senator Claude Pepper, the chairman of the committee, declared, "It is a national tragedy that nearly five million of our young men are unfit for military service at a time when the manpower needs of the Nation are so critical." Following this statement, Paul V. McNutt, Federal Security Administrator, and chairman of the War Manpower Commission, stated, "Any deficiencies in physical vigor in time of war are a threat to national safety. We have had some disturbing evidence as to how inadequate measures of the past have lowered the efficiency of our manpower today." These two statements emphasize the need of better physical development of our people for either the job of national protection in time of war or for building a better peacetime world. They indicate that existing health programs have not been as effective as they might be either in discovering defects or in following up with the appropriate corrective measures.

As one means of correcting and improving this situation, Congress has seen fit to appropriate funds to continue the community school lunch program

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for the coming school year with which to provide food for consumption by children in non-profit schools of high school grade or under--and child-care centers.

School lunches lay the foundation for a healthier and more physically fit people. Many children can no longer depend on the home to supply a nourishing noon meal, as many mothers who formerly made a full-time job of taking care of their families are now spending their days in war industries. Then, too, many school children come from large families whose purchasing power has long been inadequate and has not been increased by the war. Such families now find it more difficult than ever to provide the foods needed for health and growth, and for many youngsters the noon meal at school is the best one they have during the day.

Originally, school lunches were part of a broad plan to increase the domestic consumption of agricultural commodities, especially among people in low-income groups. Surplus farm products were bought by the Government and distributed free to persons unable to buy them. Even now, the school lunch program has the important objective of increasing home use of farm products, though the idea of providing school children with adequate diets is becoming firmly established in our social thinking. Post-war development of this program will mean enlarged markets for _____ milk, butter, and meats, for potatoes, _____ and other vegetables...fruits from our orchards...and also for the many fine varieties of fresh water fish from _____ lakes and rivers.

Federal funds will be available during 1944 and 1945 to assist schools in carrying on the lunch program...but it is basically a community undertaking, relying on local initiative, administration, and sponsorship. The responsibility of planning, preparing, and serving meals is one for the

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"home folks"...preferably organized into a council composed of such persons as school administrator, home economics and agricultural instructors, and representatives of the PTA and other civic organizations. Such councils might well consider the promotion of garden projects to insure adequate food supplies...food preservation activities...the use of all available resources, local, state, and federal...and the securing of adequate facilities and personnel.

Food that is not grown or donated to the lunch program is bought locally, and the War Food Administration pays local sponsors for their food purchases up to a certain amount determined on the type of lunches served. The largest reimbursement is for the Type A, or complete, lunch. It's the best one, and should provide for one-third to one-half of the day's food requirements. The Type A lunch includes, first, a half-pint of milk as a beverage...then, two servings of vegetables, or two servings of fruit, or one of each...third, a serving of meat, fish, eggs, dried peas, or beans--a protein food, in other words. Fourth, there's a whole-grain or enriched cereal--either in bread or some other form...and spread with butter or fortified margarine. There may be a dessert, but that's optional. It's a regular meal--and that's what a good lunch should be.

Since some schools or child-care centers may not be able, especially at first, to meet these "A" requirements...a Type B lunch may be served. It's similar to Type A, except that it includes smaller quantities of the different foods. Type C is a half-pint of milk, which supplements the regular meals children receive at home. Innumerable menus can be developed around the suggested patterns for Type A and B lunches to provide variety in the noon meal at school.

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Because local people plan the project, the lunch program can be tailored to fit the needs of the particular community. In one metropolitan center, for example, food for the program is prepared by a large number of paid workers in a big central kitchen, and then it's delivered in heat-retaining containers by truck to individual schools. In smaller cities, mothers may do the cooking, serving, and the rest of the work connected with the program. In small rural schools, the teacher may take charge, with the pupils helping to plan, cook, and serve food, or mothers may take turns preparing a daily hot dish. In village schools, the home economics teacher often takes charge when she is given time in her schedule to supervise either students or paid or volunteer workers.

Records kept in many schools show that attendance is better after a school lunch program is put in operation than it was before, due in many cases to the result of less illness. There are many striking reports of youngsters who have been built up physically as a result of school lunches. Eating together in groups improves table manners and personal habits, and through the example of watching their schoolmates eat certain foods, children come to like what's good for them.

Groups and organizations throughout the state who are interested in getting more detailed information and advice regarding the school lunch program should write to the Office of Distribution, War Food Administration, _____, _____. You are urged to act promptly, as the new school year is not far off, and there is urgent need to devise means of retaining those programs now in operation and of enlarging this worthy service.

No one likes to see a hungry child. Everyone wants a child to have enough of the right kinds of food to help him grow into a strong adult. Food in the form of an adequate diet is his birthright -- a fundamental part of his well being.

Show me a healthy child and I will show you a happy one.

What greater gift can Americans of this generation make to those of the next -- than the gift of good health. The part played by good food in this gift of health is available to your children this school year. But to participate, they must attend a school where the program is in effect. This throws the initiative for providing such a program to citizens and organizations, yes, people like you and me within the community which is served by the individual schools.

America needs us strong.

Your Government is doing its part.

For your children's sake -- do yours!

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